

App. No. 09/874,481

Provisional election under 37 CFR §1.143  
Preliminary amendment under 37 CFR §1.115

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as set forth hereinbelow.

1. **(original)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising:
  - a supplier database, the supplier database including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;
  - an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers; and
  - a programmed order processor operatively linked to the supplier database and the order database, the processor being programmed for automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into the supplier database,

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- automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers,  
automatically entering the received order information into the order database,  
automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier,  
automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order,  
automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,  
automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database, and  
automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.
2. **(original)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may further include product content providers.
  3. **(original)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically issuing instructions for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product supplier to the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order.
  4. **(original)** The system of Claim 3, wherein:  
the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
and  
the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order is a participating product retailer.
  5. **(original)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically issuing instructions for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product supplier to the product purchaser.

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6. **(original)** The system of Claim 5, wherein:  
the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
and  
the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the  
order is a participating product retailer.
7. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the processor is further  
programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:  
enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the  
multiple participating product suppliers from which ordered products, listed in  
orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a  
product purchaser; ~~and~~ or  
enabling the first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of  
products available from another of the multiple participating product supplier  
from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating  
supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser.
8. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the processor is further  
programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:  
enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the  
multiple participating product suppliers for which ordered products, listed in  
orders placed with the eligible subset of the multiple participating product  
suppliers, are available for delivery to a product purchaser; ~~and~~ or  
enabling the first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of  
products available from the first participating product supplier from which  
ordered products, listed in orders placed with another of the multiple  
participating product suppliers, are available for delivery to a product  
purchaser.
9. **(original)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and  
distribution, comprising:  
a retailer database, the retailer database including product identifying information,  
product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple

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independent participating product retailers, wherein the multiple independent product retailers offer products of a common product category;

an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product retailers; and

a programmed order processor operatively linked to the retailer database and the order database, the processor being programmed for automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple participating product retailers and entering the information into the retailer database,

automatically receiving, from multiple participating product retailers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product retailers,

automatically entering the received order information into the order database,

automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the retailer database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product retailer,

automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product retailer, thereby fulfilling the order,

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automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,  
automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the retailer database, and  
automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.

10. **(original)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising:
- a supplier database, the supplier database including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers,
  - the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category, and
  - the product inventory information is stored in the supplier database in a search table common to the multiple participating product suppliers;
- an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and
- fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers; and
- a programmed order processor operatively linked to the supplier database and the order database, the processor being programmed for automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple

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- participating product suppliers and entering the information into the supplier database,
- automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers,
- automatically entering the received order information into the order database,
- automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier,
- automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order,
- automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,
- automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database, and
- automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.
11. **(currently amended)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising:
- a supplier database, the supplier database including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and
- the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;
- an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent

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product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers; and

a programmed order processor operatively linked to the supplier database and the order database, the processor being programmed for

automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into the supplier database,

automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers,

automatically entering the received order information into the order database,

automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier,

automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order,

automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,

automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database, and

automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product,

wherein the processor is further programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:

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- enabling a first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery from the first participating product supplier to a product purchaser;
- enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser;
- enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal from a product purchaser the identity of another participating product supplier from which an ordered product, listed in an order placed with the first participating provider by the product purchaser, is delivered to the product purchaser; - ~~and~~ or
- enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal the identity of a product purchaser from another participating product supplier from which an ordered product, listed in an order placed with the first participating provider by the product purchaser, is delivered to the product purchaser.
12. **(original)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising:
- a supplier database, the supplier database including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;
- an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product

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manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers; and

a programmed order processor operatively linked to the supplier database and the order database, the processor being programmed for

automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into the supplier database,

automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers,

automatically entering the received order information into the order database,

automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier,

automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order,

automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,

automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database,

automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product,

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automatically aggregating order information pertaining to multiple orders placed by multiple product purchasers, and  
automatically issuing instructions for delivery of ordered products, listed in the aggregated order, from a selected participating product supplier, the selected participating product supplier being selected based on a supplier figure-of-merit.

13. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor is further programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:  
automatically selecting the selected participating product supplier based on information in the supplier database; ~~and~~ or  
automatically receiving bids from at least one participating product supplier and automatically selecting from among bidding participating product suppliers the selected participating product supplier.
14. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically selecting a newly-selected participating product supplier to replace the selected participating product supplier based on ~~at least one of~~ updated information in the supplier database ~~and~~ or updated bids received from the bidding participating product suppliers.
15. **(original)** The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically aggregating order information pertaining to multiple orders placed in a physical location of a participating product supplier and placed remotely with the participating product supplier.
16. **(original)** The system of Claim 12, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically aggregating order information pertaining to orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers.
17. **(original)** The system of Claim 16, wherein the processor is further programmed for automatically aggregating order information pertaining to orders placed with multiple participating product retailers.

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18. **(original)** The system of Claim 16 wherein the processor is further programmed for enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for aggregating order information.
19. **(currently amended)** A multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising:
  - a supplier database, the supplier database including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;
  - an order database, the order database including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers; and
  - a programmed order processor operatively linked to the supplier database and the order database, the processor being programmed for automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from the multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into the supplier database,

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automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers,  
automatically entering the received order information into the order database,  
automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier,  
automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order,  
automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product,  
automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database, and  
automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product,  
wherein the processor is further programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:  
automatically adjusting product pricing information in the supplier database in response to ~~at least one of~~ order information in the order database ~~and~~ or product inventory information in the supplier database; ~~and~~ or  
automatically adjusting local product inventory for the multiple participating product suppliers by  
automatically monitoring local product inventory information in the supplier database,  
in response to local product inventory information in the supplier database,  
automatically issuing instructions for transfer of products out of local product inventory of a first participating product supplier into local product inventory of a second participating product supplier, and  
in response to the transfer of local product inventory, automatically updating the local product inventory information in the supplier database.

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20. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 19, wherein the transferred local product inventory includes ~~at least one of~~ used product, rare product, collectible product, private-label product, ~~and~~ or out-of-production product.
21. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 20, wherein the processor is further programmed for consigning to the second participating product supplier ~~at least one of~~ transferred used product, rare product, collectible product, private-label product, ~~and~~ or out-of-production product.
22. **(currently amended)** The system of Claim 19, wherein the processor is further programmed ~~for at least one of:~~ for:  
enabling the first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers to which product inventory may be transferred; ~~and~~ or  
enabling the second participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which product inventory may be transferred.
23. **(original)** A method for multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:  
the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of  
participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and  
participating product retailers, and  
the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database; and  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.

24. **(original)** The method of Claim 23, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may further include product content providers.
25. **(original)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product supplier to the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order.
26. **(original)** The method of Claim 25, wherein:  
the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
and  
the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order is a participating product retailer.
27. **(original)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product supplier to the product purchaser.
28. **(original)** The method of Claim 27, wherein:  
the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
and  
the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order is a participating product retailer.

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29. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 23, further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of products available from another of the multiple participating product supplier from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser.

30. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 23, further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery to a product purchaser; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of products available from the first participating product supplier from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with another of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery to a product purchaser.

31. **(original)** A method for multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information,

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product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product retailers and entering the information into a retailer database, the retailer database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product retailers, wherein the multiple independent product retailers offer products of a common product category;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product retailers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product retailers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product retailers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the retailer database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product retailer;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each

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order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product retailer, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the retailer database; and

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.

**32. (original) A method for multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:**

under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:

the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers,

the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category, and

the product inventory information is stored in the supplier database in a search table common to the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating

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product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database; and

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.

33. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:

under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:

the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and

the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating

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product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database; and

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product,

further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery from the first participating product supplier to a product purchaser;

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal from a product purchaser the identity of another participating product supplier from which an ordered product, listed in an order placed with the first participating provider by the product purchaser, is delivered to the product purchaser; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal the identity of a product purchaser from another participating product supplier from which an ordered product, listed in an order placed with the first participating provider by the product purchaser, is delivered to the product purchaser.

**34. (original)** A method for multiply-integrated system for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:

under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:

the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and

the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

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under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically aggregating order information pertaining to multiple orders placed by multiple product purchasers; and

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery of ordered products, listed in the aggregated order, from a selected participating product supplier, the selected participating product supplier being selected based on a supplier figure-of-merit.

35. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 34, further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically selecting the selected participating product supplier based on information in the supplier database; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving bids from at least one participating product supplier and automatically selecting from among bidding participating product suppliers the selected participating product supplier.

36. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 35, further comprising the step of:
- under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically selecting a newly-selected participating product supplier to replace the selected participating product supplier based on ~~at least one of~~ updated information in the supplier database ~~and~~ or updated bids received from the bidding participating product suppliers.

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37. **(original)** The method of Claim 34, further comprising the step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically aggregating order information pertaining  
to multiple orders placed in a physical location of a participating product  
supplier and placed remotely with the participating product supplier.
38. **(currently amended)** The method of ~~Claim 34~~ Claim 34, further comprising the  
step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically aggregating order information pertaining  
to orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers.
39. **(original)** The method of Claim 38, further comprising the step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically aggregating order information pertaining  
to orders placed with multiple participating product retailers.
40. **(original)** The method of Claim 38, further comprising the step of:  
under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to select  
an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for aggregating  
order information.
41. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated system for product  
inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
under control of a programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information,  
product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple  
participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier  
database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed  
processor and including product identifying information, product inventory  
information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent  
participating product suppliers, wherein:

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the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and

the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, automatically issuing instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product

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to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier,  
thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order  
database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information  
pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database; and

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for  
each delivered product,

further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically adjusting product pricing information  
in the supplier database in response to ~~at least one of~~ order information in  
the order database ~~and~~ or product inventory information in the supplier  
database; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being  
programmed therefor, automatically adjusting local product inventory for  
the multiple participating product suppliers by  
automatically monitoring local product inventory information in the supplier  
database,

in response to local product inventory information in the supplier database,  
automatically issuing instructions for transfer of products out of local  
product inventory of a first participating product supplier into local  
product inventory of a second participating product supplier, and  
in response to the transfer of local product inventory, automatically  
updating the local product inventory information in the supplier  
database.

42. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 41, wherein the transferred local  
product inventory includes ~~at least one of~~ used product, rare product, collectible  
product, private-label product, ~~and~~ or out-of-production product.

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43. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 42, further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, consigning to the second participating product supplier ~~at least one of~~ transferred used product, rare product, collectible product, private-label product, ~~and~~ or out-of-production product.

44. **(currently amended)** The method of Claim 41, further ~~comprising at least one of the steps of:~~ comprising:

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers to which product inventory may be transferred; ~~and~~ or

under control of the programmed processor, the programmed processor being programmed therefor, enabling the second participating product supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which product inventory may be transferred.